

## 2007.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Consultation on Content and Procedures, 2016

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## Preface

### PREFACE

The purpose of this document is to initiate public consultation regarding the nature and content of the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires that the "... census shall be taken in the year 1981 and in every fifth year thereafter, ...". The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is preparing to undertake the next Census in August 2016, on a date yet to be determined.

The Census is the largest statistical collection undertaken by the ABS and one of the most important. There are two broad objectives that underpin the Census: firstly, to measure accurately the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night and the dwellings in which they live; and secondly, to provide timely, high quality and relevant data for small geographic areas and small population groups, to complement the rich but broad level data provided by ABS surveys. The Census also provides a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each of the states, territories and local government areas.

It is vital the Census continues to adapt its means of engaging the public and collecting information. The ABS will look to continue its path towards a completely Digital Census, with the majority of households completing their Census form online in 2016.

A review of all topics is a priority for the 2016 Census to ensure the continuing relevance of the Census in contemporary Australia. It is expected that demand for new topics in the 2016 Census will be high. However, it is not sustainable to continue to expand the number of questions asked on the Census form. The ABS needs to ensure the relevance of the Census, without increasing respondent burden and costs associated with a longer questionnaire.

This publication describes the proposed procedures for the 2016 Census and provides an initial view of the topics to be reviewed or included. Users of Census data and others are invited to comment on any aspect of the conduct and content of the Census by 31 May 2013.

As the Census development continues, the ABS will be consulting Census users about other aspects of the program.

Brian Pink

Australian Statistician

## Introduction

### INTRODUCTION

Australia's seventeenth national Census of Population and Housing will be held in August 2016, on a date yet to be determined. A significant amount of planning is devoted to each Census to ensure that the output reflects the information needs of Australians.

The 2016 Census will be the first predominantly digital Census for Australia, with the electronic form the primary mode of response and a greater digital engagement with the Australian public. The vision is for 2021 to move the Census even closer to being paper free and to investigate the collection of more detailed information for specific population groups, by tailoring a path through the electronic form based on their reported demographics.

The key goals for the 2016 Census are to:

- improve coverage
- ensure the relevance of the Census data to users and providers
- use resources effectively and efficiently
- protect the privacy of the public.

With the release of this paper, the ABS is inviting users of Census data and members of the public to make a submission on topics and/or other issues concerning the 2016 Census. It serves to:

- provide background information on the Census of Population and Housing
- describe the proposed procedures for the 2016 Census
- give an overview of Census topics
- set out proposed changes being considered for topics and questions in 2016
- assist you in participating in the 2016 Census consultation process.

The ABS encourages you to take this opportunity to make a submission by 31 May 2013. This will be a way of expressing your views on existing or new topics and influencing changes for the 2016 Census.

This information paper is the first in a series of papers in which the ABS will publish its views and seek

comments in the lead up to the 2016 Census. Further publications will seek views about other aspects of the Census, including the output strategy, the classifications, and products and services to be produced.

## Background

### BACKGROUND

#### WHY HAVE A CENSUS?

The Census of Population and Housing is the largest statistical collection undertaken by the ABS and one of the most important. Its objective is to measure accurately the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night, and the dwellings in which they live. It provides a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each of the states, territories and local government areas, primarily for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds.

The Census also provides information on the characteristics of the Australian population and its housing within small geographic areas and small population groups.

Census data are used to support the planning, administration, policy development and evaluation of activities of governments and other users.

#### SCOPE

The scope of the Census is all people in Australia on Census Night, excluding foreign diplomats and their families. Visitors to Australia are counted regardless of how long they have been in the country or how long they plan to stay. Australian residents out of the country on Census Night are out of the scope of the Census.

People outside Australia on Census Night who are not required to undertake migration formalities, such as those on oil and gas rigs off the Australian coast, are included.

The Territories of Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island will be included in the 2016 Census. Following the enactment of the *Territories Law Reform Act 1992*, the results for these Territories were included in the counts for Australia for the first time in 1996.

People will be counted where they are on Census Night. This Census count is referred to as one conducted on an actual location or place of enumeration basis (often referred to as a *de facto* Census). Census counts will also be available on a place of usual residence basis.

## Confidentiality and Privacy

### CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

The Census collects information relating to each person and household in the country but it is not concerned with information about individuals as such. The Census is taken to provide information about the community as a whole and about groups within the community. The public expects that the information they provide will be kept confidential. The ABS protects all Census information, meets the public's expectations, and complies with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. The ABS also has an obligation to comply with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the *Privacy Act 1988*.

To ensure that confidentiality and privacy provisions are observed, a comprehensive set of practices is used by the ABS. These practices include legally binding all officers of the ABS to secrecy under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, including temporary staff recruited for collection and processing of the Census.

The ABS has not retained name information after completion of Census processing. The only exception is if a person explicitly agrees by answering the relevant question on the Census form to have their name-identified responses retained by the National Archives of Australia for release in 99 years time.

The ABS uses the strongest encryption technology that current internet browsers will support for the online Census to ensure information is delivered securely. All possible measures to protect the integrity of the online site are taken. Comprehensive security arrangements, as used within the wider ABS, are used for online and paper Census forms and for ABS computer systems.

For the 2016 Census, householders will be able to complete the form online or mail their form back to the ABS. Any individual member of a household (including a visitor) can request their own secure access codes to the online form, or a separate paper form and privacy envelope.

The ABS only uses information collected in the Census for the purposes of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

## **TIME CAPSULE**

In Australian Censuses prior to 2001, forms and other name-identified records were destroyed once the statistical data required for the purposes of the Census had been extracted. Since the 2001 Census all people have been given the option of having their name-identified responses retained for 99 years (Time Capsule). After 99 years, the name-identified data will be made public for future generations. This option is now a permanent feature of the Census.

In order to ensure that the current high levels of public confidence and cooperation in the Census are maintained, and to respect the wishes of those who do not want their information retained for future release, information will only be kept for those persons who explicitly give their consent. For privacy reasons the name-identified information will not be available for any purpose, including by a court or tribunal, within a 99 year closed access period.

After this information has been transferred to the National Archives of Australia and statistical processing is completed, the ABS will destroy all paper and online Census forms including the computer images of those forms. As in the past, the paper forms will be pulped for recycling.

# **Collection Procedures**

## **CENSUS COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

### **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the collection operation is to conduct a high quality Census in a timely and cost-effective manner. In line with this objective, significant changes are being planned to overcome the challenges in recruiting field staff, to take advantage of new technologies and to become even more efficient while maintaining the coverage of the Census operation.

### **DELIVERY AND COLLECTION**

The delivery and collection activity being planned for the 2016 Census will see changes to the way the Census is conducted. These expected changes build on the outcomes from recent Censuses in Australia, where use of the online Census form has grown from 10% in 2006 to 33% in 2011. This increase in use highlights an expected further increase in the future, which means the way delivery and collection is undertaken needs to change to support online return as the primary approach. This approach takes into account social changes and public expectations.

The new delivery approach proposed for 2016 removes the need for Census field officers to visit every dwelling in a large proportion of areas across Australia. Instead, secure access codes for the online form will be mailed to dwellings in the first instance. These will be followed by reminders sent by mail. In these areas, paper forms will also be sent by mail if required, and householders will be able to mail their paper forms back. Census field officers in these areas will only visit households that have not participated by use of the online form or by mailing their paper form back.

In the remaining areas of Australia, a more traditional delivery and collection approach will be used. In these situations Census materials will be delivered to each dwelling to allow respondents to complete their forms online or on the paper form.

To support the Census delivery and collection activities, there will be an increase in the level of technology in the field to assist with field management and, ultimately, assist in maintaining coverage outcomes for the Census.

## **USE OF ADDRESS INFORMATION**

To support all household and business collections, including the 2016 Census, the ABS will develop an Address Register as the central source of addresses used in collection of information. The main input to the Address Register will be the Geocoded National Address File (G-NAF), with possible supplementation from other available address data sources and field work by ABS Officers.

For the 2016 Census, it is expected residential addresses from this register will be used in the mail out of access codes for the online Census form. They will also be provided to Census field officers to allow them to follow-up dwellings that have not returned a form. In areas where the address register is considered to be of poor quality, Census field officers will be recording addresses of all the dwellings they visit.

All addresses provided during the Census, including those provided on census forms or those recorded by Census field officers, may be used to validate the quality and coverage of the Address Register so that it continues to grow to be a comprehensive listing of residential and business addresses in Australia.

## **SPECIAL STRATEGIES**

Historically, the ABS has used a range of targeted approaches for specific population groups to ensure that all people in Australia are included in the Census. These special strategies are designed, in consultation and collaboration with the relevant communities and/or service approaches, to ensure these groups participate in the Census and accurate information is collected.

Some examples of population groups where targeted approaches are employed to optimise accessibility and inclusion are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with disabilities
- homeless people
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people living in mining camps and fly-in/fly-out workers
- travellers.

These strategies have included a range of different approaches for previous Censuses. More information about what was done in 2011 can be found in 2011 Census Special Enumeration Strategies (cat.no. 2911.0.55.004)

For the 2016 Census, the ABS will be reviewing these approaches and the associated procedures used in 2011, so they take into account the proposed new Census enumeration model where applicable. The ABS will also be looking at opportunities to evolve these special approaches into being a core part of the main operation to allow all Australians to participate fully in the Census.

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ASSISTANCE**

Public cooperation with and acceptance of the Census is essential for production of high quality statistics. For this reason a public awareness campaign will be conducted prior to and during the Census. The aims of the campaign are to maintain the cooperation of the public and the high quality of the responses to the Census by informing the public of the usefulness of the statistics obtained and the confidentiality of the information provided.

Provisions will be made for those who may, for language or other reasons, have difficulty in completing the form. These provisions will be made known and advertised in the public awareness campaign.

At the time of the 2016 Census, the ABS will make available answers to commonly asked questions about the purpose of the Census. Members of the public will be able to access these through self-help facilities, and through an inquiry service. This service will also include facilities for the hard of hearing, the vision impaired and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## **NON-COOPERATION**

It is expected that the public awareness campaign on the nature of the Census, the assurances of confidentiality and the uses of the resulting statistics will ensure maximum cooperation. Action, including legal action, will be considered only where all possible measures to ensure completion of a Census form have failed.

## **Results and Output**

### **RESULTS AND OUTPUT**

#### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

During 2014, a comprehensive consultation program will provide Census data users with an opportunity to suggest improvements and to propose new Census products and services to meet emerging needs.

#### **POPULATION MEASURES**

The 2016 Census will be conducted on an actual location basis. As in 2006 and 2011, standard products from the 2016 Census are expected to be released based on where people usually live (place of usual residence), with later release of 'as enumerated' data.

#### **CLASSIFICATIONS**

Most classifications to be used in the 2016 Census will be similar to those used in the 2011 Census. These will be reviewed in the lead up to 2016. Comments will be sought on these at the time of each review. Some new and revised classifications will also be necessary to reflect changes in the Australian social environment and to describe new topics introduced to the Census.

#### **DATA RELEASE**

In recent Censuses, data have been released in multiple stages. It is expected that this will again be the case for the 2016 Census, however the composition and timing of each stage will be reviewed in order to improve the value received from the data.

#### **EVALUATION OF UNDERCOUNT**

An integral step in understanding the quality of the Census count is to evaluate under-enumeration. For this purpose a Post Enumeration Survey will be conducted soon after Census Night.

Further detailed evaluation studies will be conducted to provide users of Census data with information about data quality, and to provide feedback for improvements for the following Census.

## **Geographic Outputs**

### **GEOGRAPHIC OUTPUTS**

The 2016 Census data will be output using the 2016 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). The 2016 version of the ASGS is likely to be very similar to the 2011 edition of the ASGS but with minor updates made primarily by splitting existing regions to enable a high level of comparability between the 2011 and 2016 geographic areas. Information around any ASGS changes will become available through the ABS Statistical Geography web portal.

In 2016, data will not be output on Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) from the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) as it was for the 2011 Census. In 2011 this was done to assist users in transitioning from the final version of the ASGC to the ASGS. LGA data will continue to be available as part of the ASGS into the future.

The Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1), which on average has approximately 400 people or 160 dwellings, will be the smallest geographic region on which a wide range of Census data will be available. However, consideration is being given to allowing users to create custom geographic areas based on aggregations of Mesh Blocks, which are the smallest geographic unit in the ASGS. Consideration is also being given to creating non-ABS geographies that approximate areas such as Suburbs and Postcodes, with Mesh Blocks, which will create more accurate approximations of these areas.

For further information on ABS Statistical Geography see [www.abs.gov.au/geography](http://www.abs.gov.au/geography).

## Census Content

### CENSUS CONTENT

#### OVERVIEW OF CENSUS TOPICS

Since the first national Census in 1911, the content of Censuses has varied. Some topics have been included in each Census since 1911, for example, age, marital status and religion, while others have been included or excluded depending on the assessed importance of the topic at the time. See Census Topics 1911-2011.

In February 2008, the Australian Statistician announced that due to financial constraints within the ABS, changes needed to be made to its work program. One of these changes was a decision by the Statistician to conduct the 2011 Census as a 'no change' in content Census. As a consequence the public consultation process regarding topics and procedures for the 2011 Census was stopped. All topics asked in the 2006 Census were retained. Prior to that point, a need for additional topics had already been identified and it is likely that more data needs would have emerged if the consultation had continued.

The ABS is conducting a review of all current topics, which will enable incorporation of appropriate new and revised topics in the 2016 Census, to meet the emerging needs of Australia's constantly changing and diversifying society. The review aims to optimise data relevance, whilst also considering the decreasing need for any current topics. As a result of this review, it is expected that some topics may be removed from the Census and that others may be included on a 10 yearly cycle. It may subsequently be possible to include a small number of additional topics following their evaluation and successful testing.

Conducting the Census operation efficiently and effectively imposes constraints on the types of topics that can be included. There is also a need to limit the total number of questions in order to minimise respondent load and Census costs.

#### SELF-ENUMERATION

In the Census, information is collected by 'self-enumeration', with each household being required to fill in a Census form. Self-enumeration, and the need to ensure that the large Census operation is conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible, impose certain constraints on the type of topics included. Questions asked on the Census form need to be readily understood by all householders. The Census form may be completed by one household member on behalf of others.

Topics that require detailed explanation to ensure accurate answers are unlikely to be answered correctly. Research has shown that people often do not read the explanations that accompany questions. Questions that are controversial or could cause adverse reactions may also not be answered correctly. Such questions could also adversely affect the quality of other responses. Information about these topics may require interviewer based collection methods.

#### TOPIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The ABS topic recommendations are being provided as a starting point for public comment - see Making a Submission for more details on the public consultation and submission process.

The ABS has used the following set of criteria to make its initial topic recommendations and judge the suitability of topics for a Census. The questions on the submission form also relate to these five criteria, which will be used to finalise recommendations following the public consultation and submission process.

- The topic is of current national importance.
- There is a current need for data on the topic for small population groups and/or at the small area level.

- There are no other suitable alternative data sources available for the topic.
- The topic is suitable for inclusion in the Census.
- There is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic in the following Census.

The assessment criteria on national importance reflects the importance of trusted statistical information to inform public debate and enable effective decision making. The ABS is working with users and producers of official statistics to identify the core set of essential statistics from a large number of data sources, that are critical for decision-making for the nation. A preliminary list of Essential Statistical Assets for Australia (ESAs) was released in May 2012 for consultation. This preliminary list has been considered by the ABS in its initial topic recommendations for the 2016 Census. The preliminary list of ESAs includes the following statistics sourced from the Census of Population and Housing:

- Household economic wellbeing
- Housing
- Estimated resident population
- Housing utilisation
- Internet usage and access
- Population structure and household composition
- Social housing supply.

## Topics - Recommended for Retention

### TOPICS - RECOMMENDED FOR RETENTION

This information paper is the start of the formal submission process. The views below and in the following three sections are the preliminary views of the ABS. They are aimed at initiating discussion in the public consultation process. The final ABS recommendations will not be formed until consideration of all submissions from the consultation process and in the context of testing and evaluation outcomes.

Topics recommended for retention include topics that are required for conducting a successful Census and for fulfilment of legislative requirements, or for the calculation of estimated resident populations. Also included here are core/socio-demographic variables that are required for national reporting and have continued demand for output for small areas and for small population groups.

Click on the topic below for more details or see Supporting Information on Topics.

#### **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin**

The Census is the only comprehensive source of small area socio-demographic data on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and this information is used for estimates and projections of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

#### **Address on Census night**

The collection of information on household address on Census Night is essential for the conduct of an accurate and high quality Census. It is used for geographic coding of place of enumeration and for estimation of the resident population.

#### **Age**

Age data are essential for the estimation of the resident population in each of the states, territories and local areas, which are required by legislation for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds. There may be some small enhancements made to the age question in the 2016 Census, to reduce respondent confusion and improve data quality.

#### **Attendance at an educational institution**

This topic is used for education and labour market planning. It identifies the current study and educational participation of respondents.

#### **County of birth**

Data on the country a person was born in are used to produce estimates of the resident population by country of birth. The ABS will make some small changes to the list of response categories for common countries of birth to reflect the most common responses received in the 2011 Census.

#### **Family relationships/Social marital status**



Family relationship is critical in understanding changes in Australian society and trends in family composition. There is currently a review underway of relevant standards and this might result in changes to the design and wording of this question for the 2016 Census.

### **Highest year of schooling**

This topic is an important input into determining the level of highest educational attainment. It is also an important indicator of education need and disadvantage, and is used for planning and profiling at the small area level.

### **Hours worked**

This topic currently collects information on actual hours worked last week, which is used to derive full-time/part-time status. There is some additional demand for information on usual hours worked. User feedback is sought on the relative priorities of the existing topic on actual hours (hours worked last week) and the potential replacement topic of usual hours.

### **Housing costs**

The data collected from housing rental costs and housing loan repayments are important as they are used to assist in benchmarks for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Australian National Accounts. This data also helps estimate homelessness and housing affordability.

### **Income**

Census data on income are used as an indicator of relative advantage and disadvantage and economic wellbeing, especially for small areas and small population groups. The ABS will investigate improving the income topic by collecting more precise income data through a write-in question and by statistical data integration with other data sources.

### **Industry of employment**

Data on the geographic distribution of industry are needed to monitor labour market changes and provide a basis for social and economic policy and planning. The ABS will consider whether there is sufficient user demand for the Census to continue coding industry at the most detailed level.

### **Internal migration**

Information on usual residence one year ago and five years ago is used to determine the patterns of internal migration, which contribute to the calculation of estimated resident population, population projections and regional migration statistics. The ABS is considering the collection of actual country of residence one year and five years ago in the Census, instead of the current tick-box for 'other country'.

### **Labour force status**

Information about labour force status is essential for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes.

### **Landlord type**

This topic defines the landlord type of the dwelling, such as whether it is rented privately via a landlord, a government agency or residential park. Data collected on landlord type is used for planning and policy purposes. Landlord Type standards are being reviewed prior to the 2016 Census.

### **Location of private dwelling**

This topic is an important part of estimating homelessness and those people who are marginally housed. It is also used to determine the number of retirement villages and home estates, and the characteristics of residents.

### **Main language other than English spoken at home**

Data gained from questions on language use are important for a wide range of policies at the national, state, territory and local levels. The ABS will make some small changes to the list of response categories for common main languages other than English spoken at home to reflect the most common responses received in the 2011 Census.

### **Mode of travel to work**

The data collected from this topic are widely used at the small area level for transport planning. They complement the data collected from the Workplace address/Journey to work topic.

### **Name**

The collection of information regarding name is considered essential for the conduct of an accurate and high quality Census. It is also essential for the conduct of a high quality Post Enumeration Survey, which is used to quantify the Census undercoverage and estimate the resident population.

**Non-school qualifications**

This topic is an important input into determining the level of highest educational attainment. Data gathered during the Census about non-school qualifications are used to support planning and policy development in the areas of education, training and employment.

**Number of bedrooms**

The number of bedrooms in a property provides an indication of dwelling size, dwelling utilisation or under-utilisation, and potential overcrowding by the calculation of occupancy ratios. This topic is an important part of estimating homelessness and for investigating people who are marginally housed.

**Occupation**

Data about occupation are required for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes. The ABS will consider whether there is sufficient user demand for the Census to continue coding occupation at the most detailed level. The ABS and Statistics New Zealand are undertaking a minor review of the relevant standard.

**Proficiency in spoken English**

This topic is used in conjunction with Main language other than English spoken at home, to assist in planning policies at a range of geographic levels.

**Registered marital status**

Registered marital status identifies whether people are never married, widowed, divorced, separated or married. Some data about registered marital status are available through the family relationship/social marital status topic, which outputs a person's relationship status based on their current living arrangements. The ABS recommends that Registered marital status be considered in conjunction with the output available from family relationship/social marital status. Users should consider the ongoing need for information from the Registered marital status topic not based on current living arrangements (e.g. never married, separated, divorced and widowed) and whether the information available from social marital status topic will meet requirements.

**Religious affiliation**

Information on religious affiliation is widely used in the religious community, and by government agencies that provide services complementary to those provided by religious organisations. The ABS will make some small changes to the list of response categories for common religions.

**Residential status in a non-private dwelling**

This topic is important for planning and delivery of services and it is used to inform understanding of dwelling stock supply and demand trends. The ABS will consider updates in light of the proposed changes to the collection model for the 2016 Census.

**Sex**

Information gained from questions on sex is essential for the estimation of the resident population in each of the states, territories and local areas, which are required by legislation for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds. The ABS is currently reviewing the Sex Standard which may impact on the collection of sex and gender in ABS household collections including the Census.

**Structure of private dwelling**

This topic is used to determine changes in housing patterns and stock, land use forecasting, transport planning and the compilation of homelessness estimates. This question was previously answered by Census Field Officers as a part of the collection process and a proposed new collection method will be tested for the 2016 Census.

**Tenure type**

Data on Tenure type (whether a dwelling is rented, owned with a mortgage or owned without a mortgage) is used for planning, analysis and policy purposes for small areas and population groups. Tenure Type standards are being reviewed prior to the 2016 Census.

**Type of non-private dwelling**

The Census includes data about people residing in non-private dwellings and the type of those non-private dwellings. They are used to inform understanding of dwelling stock supply and demand trends, and to estimate homelessness. The ABS will consider updates in the light of the proposed changes to the collection model for the 2016 Census.

**Usual residence at Census time**

Information on usual residence at Census time is essential for the production of accurate state, territory and

local government resident population estimates, a primary objective of the Census.

### **Workplace address/Journey to work**

Census data on workplace address are coded to work destination zones. Along with mode of travel to work, this data provides valuable information on journey to work patterns and on daytime populations of specified areas.

### **Year of arrival in Australia**

Year of arrival data are necessary to analyse changes in the characteristics of migrants over time, particularly in distinguishing between recent and 'older' migrants. The ABS will also investigate the suitability of other data sources.

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## **Topics - Priority to be Reviewed**

### **TOPICS - TO BE REVIEWED**

Topics in this section are under review prior to a decision being made about their inclusion in the 2016 Census. ABS considers that they may have a lower rating on one or more of the topic assessment criteria. There may be concerns about the level of national importance of the topic, the quality of the data, the overlap with another topic, or there may be suitable alternative administrative data sources available.

It is expected that some of these topics may be recommended for exclusion from the 2016 Census, if there is insufficient justification or quality concerns that are not adequately addressed. The ABS is seeking user input to determine the priority of these topics.

As part of the review, it is also possible that some topics may be reduced in frequency to a 10-yearly cycle, rather than being included in every Census.

Some of these topics may require some question redesign if they are to be included in the 2016 Census.

Click on the topic below for more details or see [Supporting Information on Topics](#).

### **Ancestry**

A person's ancestry, in conjunction with their country of birth and information on whether their parents were born in Australia or overseas, assists in indicating the ethnic background of first and second generation Australians. The ABS recommends this topic be reviewed in conjunction with Country of birth of parents to determine priority, relevance and suitability. The ABS is also seeking views on whether this topic could potentially be included on a 10-yearly cycle rather than a five-yearly cycle.

### **Australian citizenship**

Information about Australian citizenship is used to monitor the take-up of Australian citizenship by the overseas-born population and identify the characteristics of non-Australian citizens. The ABS recommends investigation of administrative data sources to determine their suitability.

### **Country of birth of parents**

Data on a person's ethnic or cultural origins are in high demand, and this information is useful for population groups which are unable to be identified through the other ethnicity questions. The ABS is reviewing this topic in conjunction with the Ancestry topic to determine priority, relevance and suitability, and is seeking user input.

### **Government/Non-government employer**

Information on government/non-government employer, classified by industry and occupation, is required by labour market economists to analyse changes in the labour force. The ABS considers that this topic rates less highly on the assessment criteria than other topics, and will review its relevance for inclusion in the 2016 Census.

### **Internet access**

This topic has been included on the Census form since 2001 and is important for government policy and planning decisions. The ABS is seeking further justification for the ongoing collection of information about internet access and the relative priorities of the potential components of this topic (type of dwelling internet connection, personal access to the internet or personal use of the internet).

### **Need for assistance**

Data on people who need assistance due to a severe or profound disability are required for developing federal and state government policies and community based programs, and for program and service delivery funding allocation. The ABS is considering recent international recommendations on disability questions suitable for Censuses.

### **Status in employment**

Information about status in employment is important for distinguishing between employees and the self-employed, and is used for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes. The ABS considers that this topic rates less highly on the assessment criteria than other topics and is seeking user justification for the ongoing inclusion of this topic.

### **Unpaid work**

This topic was introduced in the 2006 Census. It includes questions on: unpaid domestic work, unpaid care of other due to disability, illness or old age; unpaid care of children; and voluntary work. Information is sought on whether any components of this topic have higher priority than other components and the relative priority of a potential new component on main activity of people not in the labour force.

## **Topics - Recommended for Exclusion**

### **TOPICS - RECOMMENDED FOR EXCLUSION**

The review of all current topics may enable incorporation of appropriate new and revised topics on the Census to meet emerging needs. This will assist in optimising data relevance, whilst also considering the decreasing need for any current topics. As a result of this review, it is expected that some topics may be removed from the Census and that others may be included on a 10-yearly cycle.

The following topics are under consideration for exclusion from the 2016 Census.

Click on the topic below for more details or see Supporting Information on Topics.

### **Community Development Employment Program (CDEP)**

This topic collects information about participation in the CDEP. It does not provide a national measure of participation in the program as data are only collected from selected discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The ABS considers that the significant changes to the structure of the program since 2009 limit the comparability of the Census time series and utility of this data.

### **Employment type**

Information about employment type is used to understand the characteristics of the workforce and the extent of self-employment. Following a review of labour statistics standards, the employment type and status in employment classifications are being combined into a single output classification and the information will continue to be available from status in employment output (pending a decision on its priority). There will be no changes required to Census questions.

### **Number of children ever born**

This topic is used for population projections and the assessment of changes in Australian fertility patterns. The ABS recommends that this topic returns to being collected on a 10-yearly cycle and consequently proposes that it not be included in the 2016 Census.

### **Number of motor vehicles garaged**

Data on the number and distribution of vehicles have been used to assess parking and public transport requirements. However, the ABS understands that this topic has limited current use as a transport indicator and data from the Motor Vehicle Census may meet user requirements.

## **Potential New Topics**

## POTENTIAL NEW TOPICS

In a constantly changing society, it is inevitable that demand for new topics in the 2016 Census will be high. It is not sustainable to continue to increase the number of questions asked on the Census form.

The following are potential new topics for the 2016 Census, for which there is known user demand, and that generally rate well across the Census selection criteria. It is not expected that all of these suggested new topics will be included in the 2016 Census. Strong user support and justification will be needed for them to be included in the Census. Proposed new topics will be further assessed against the selection criteria, based on public submissions. The ABS will conduct field-testing of those topics that meet the selection criteria to a high extent, to further assess their suitability for inclusion in the Census. Some of these topics might be suitable for inclusion on a 10-yearly cycle.

Public submissions can also be provided on new topics not listed in this publication.

Click on the topic below for more details or see Supporting Information on Topics.

### **Educational institution address/Journey to education**

This proposed new topic would involve collecting address of educational institutions and coding it to destination zones to create information on journey to education patterns and on daytime populations of specified areas. It would be useful for education and transport planning. Educational institution address would also be useful in understanding the socioeconomic characteristics of families with children at particular schools and could be used for education policy development.

### **Long-term health conditions**

There is strong user demand for detailed knowledge of the location of people with certain long-term health conditions, particularly at the small area level. This will enable targeting of prevention and treatment programs for chronic disease. The proposed topic would collect information on a small number of health conditions, based on the national health priority areas.

### **Mode of travel to educational institution**

Mode of travel to educational institution would complement the existing topic on Mode of travel to work, which includes response categories such as train, bus, bicycle and car driver. It would also complement the proposed new topic on Educational institution address/Journey to education, and be useful for the purposes of education and transport planning.

### **Second residence/Ownership of other dwelling**

There is growing user interest in data about second residence, particularly in relation to: people who regularly stay in a second residence due to work commitments; children in shared custody arrangements who have an alternate usual residence from the one they stayed in on Census night; and students who regularly stay in a second residence due to educational requirements. This topic may also incorporate second property ownership.

### **Sources of income**

This topic would identify all sources of income, such as government pensions and allowances, investment income and wages. This new topic would enhance the income data collected by the Census and extend the social analysis that can be undertaken.

## Making a Submission

### **MAKING A SUBMISSION**

#### **CONSULTATION AND ASSESSMENT OF TOPICS**

The ABS intends to consult with groups of users of Census data in all states and territories from November 2012 to May 2013. In late 2013 the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) will discuss the views of users obtained through written submissions (which close on the 31 May 2013). During 2014 the ABS will make a submission to the Government on the nature and content of the 2016 Census. An information paper will be released outlining the 2016 Census content (cat. no. 2008.0) following Government approval.

As the Census development continues, the ABS will be consulting Census users about other aspects of the

program, including the output strategy, classifications to be used in output, and details of the 2016 Census products and services. A review of Census products and services will commence at the end of 2013 with a public consultation process planned for 2014.

## **HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED**

Following the release of this paper, the ABS will hold public seminars with groups of interested people in all capital cities. These sessions will be held during November and December 2012. These seminars will:

- explain the consultation process for the 2016 Census
- outline initial ABS views on content and procedures of the 2016 Census
- facilitate understanding of the requirements for new topics in the 2016 Census
- detail how submissions can be raised and lodged with the ABS.

For the time and location of seminars in your capital city, and how to register your interest see Information Sessions.

Seminars are open to members of the public, who are encouraged to attend to obtain more information prior to lodging a submission.

The ABS encourages you to take this opportunity to make a submission by 31 May 2013. This will be a way of expressing your views on existing or new topics and influencing changes for the 2016 Census.

## **ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

A set of criteria is used to judge the suitability of topics for a Census. The questions included in the Submission Form relate to these five criteria, which are:

- **the topic is of current national importance**

Topics selected for a Census must relate to an issue that is of current national importance. There must be a demonstrated need for the Census data for policy development, planning and program monitoring, or for the provision of data on this topic as an electoral or legislative requirement.

Submissions proposing the inclusion of new topics should clearly indicate the value of the information by showing the uses to which it will be put. Submissions should also spell out the implications of the topic not being included in the Census.

- **there is a current need for data on the topic for small population groups and/or at the small area level**

As the Census covers all households, it can produce information at the small geographic area level or about small population groups, and enables cross-classification with other characteristics collected in the Census.

Submissions proposing the inclusion of new topics or supporting existing topics, should clearly show why this information is currently needed at the small area level or for small population groups.

Information required for broad geographic areas only (e.g. at the state or national level) may be better obtained by other means (e.g. sample surveys) depending on the detail of the cross-classification required. If the need is restricted to information about a few specific small areas, other collections or methods could be more appropriate.

- **there are no other suitable alternative data sources available for the topic**

Consideration should be given to whether data are available from other sources. For example: similar or surrogate data may be collected by another organisation, there may have been surveys already conducted by the ABS, or the data may be available from administrative records.

The ABS produces an extensive range of information from economic censuses and surveys, administrative sources, and a comprehensive program of household surveys. While the ABS household surveys are not able to collect the detailed information that can be obtained from the Census for small groups or small areas, there are other advantages associated with interviewers collecting the data rather than the self-enumeration method used in the Census.

For information on all data published by the ABS, users should refer to the ABS web site at [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).

- **the topic is suitable for inclusion in the Census**

In the Census, information is collected by 'self-enumeration' with each household being required to fill in a Census form. Self-enumeration, and the need to ensure the large Census operation is conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible, impose certain constraints on the type of topics included. It is vital to minimise the reporting burden on households and control Census costs. Questions asked on the Census form need to be readily understood by all householders.

Topics that require detailed explanation to ensure accurate answers are unlikely to be answered correctly. Research has shown that people often do not read the explanations that accompany questions. Questions that are controversial or could cause adverse reactions may also not be answered correctly. Such questions could also affect the quality of other responses. Information about these types of topics may require interviewer based collection methods.

- **there is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic in the following Census**

The need for time-series data has traditionally been an implicit component of the selection criteria. There should be an appropriate balance between the two needs of relevance and time-series. If both are considered to be fulfilled (i.e. the topic is currently relevant and likely to remain relevant for future censuses) then there will be a good case for retaining or including the topic. However, if one of these is not assessed as being fulfilled (i.e. while there is comparable time series data from previous censuses the topic is no longer relevant in modern society, or while the topic is very relevant for the current times it is unlikely to remain relevant in the future) the topic is unlikely to be recommended.

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## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Submissions need to address the questions that are included in the Submission Form so the ABS can understand data needs and so that they can be carefully assessed against other competing priorities. For details see Questions included in the Submission form.

### **Authorisation**

The ABS may make public the views put forward in your submission. The information provided in the submission would mainly be used to summarise the case for or against a topic, or to answer questions from members of Parliament about the number and nature of submissions received.

However, the ABS will not publish the names of persons or organisations making submissions without first obtaining their permission to do so. The Submission Form includes a question that asks whether the person or organisation agrees to the ABS making public reference to their name or organisation name in relation to their submission.

### **More than one submission**

Each topic will be considered on its own merits against the assessment criteria. It should be noted that each submission should be about only ONE topic. A separate submission needs to be completed for each topic requested for inclusion, exclusion or modification.

### **How to lodge a submission**

The Submission Form can be completed online or downloaded and saved onto your computer for drafting and finalisation prior to submission. Electronic submissions should be lodged online or sent to [2016census@abs.gov.au](mailto:2016census@abs.gov.au)

If you require Submission Form/s in hard copy or need any assistance, please telephone the ABS National Information Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or [2016census@abs.gov.au](mailto:2016census@abs.gov.au) (via email).

Completed hard copy submissions should be sent to:

2016 Census Submissions  
Australian Bureau of Statistics

Each submission received will be acknowledged by email or post.

### **Closing date**

The closing date for submissions is 31 May 2013.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SUBMISSIONS CLOSE**

Following assessment of submissions, final recommendations on the nature and content of the 2016 Census will be discussed with ASAC in late 2013. The ABS will then make a submission to the Government, outlining recommendations on the nature and content of the 2016 Census. The content of the 2016 Census is expected to be known by the end of 2014. People who have provided submissions will be advised of the outcome at this time.

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## **About this Release**

The purpose of this publication is to initiate consultation with users of Census data and members of the public on topics or other issues concerning the 2016 Census of Population and Housing

## **Census of Population and Housing: Consultation on Content and Procedures (Media Release)**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

6 November 2012

Embargo: 11.30 am (Canberra time)

### **Have your say on the 2016 Census**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today released their initial proposals for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing, and is now inviting Australians to have their say.

The publication *2016 Census of Population and Housing: Consultation on content and procedures – cat. no. 2007.0* outlines the ABS's proposals around content and procedures for the 17<sup>th</sup> national Census to be held in 2016.

Its release also marks the beginning of a public consultation phase allowing interested parties to submit their proposals for improving the 2016 Census.

The Census takes a snapshot of our nation every five years. The ABS is undertaking this review to ensure its largest statistical collection remains relevant in our constantly changing society, and produces the highest quality data possible.

The ABS has identified a number of current topics that it will review for inclusion in the 2016 Census and topics that it is considering adding and excluding from the next Census.

The ABS will review topics such as Australian citizenship, ancestry, need for assistance and Internet access to assess their ongoing relevance while looking for ways of improving the data that is produced.

The ABS is researching new topics such as second residence, educational institution address, method of travel to educational institution, long-term health conditions and sources of income to better reflect today's social and economic landscape.

ABS Director of 2016 Census Data Jenny Telford said this is a unique opportunity for Census data users and the public to have their say on the types of questions to be asked on the next Census.

"Census data assists government, business, researchers and the community to make informed decisions and plan for a brighter future," Ms Telford said.



"Involving all Australians in the decision making process for the next Census helps us make sure the Census continues to produce a rich and valuable dataset that meets people's needs. I encourage anyone interested in a making a submission to go to the ABS website for more information."

The consultation period is open from 6 November until 31 May 2013. To make a submission, visit [www.abs.gov.au/census](http://www.abs.gov.au/census), read the ABS proposals in the consultation publication, and use the online form to lodge a submission.

## Explanatory Notes

### Abbreviations

#### ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ASAC	Australian Statistics Advisory Council
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPI	Consumer Price Index
ESA	Essential Statistical Asset
G-NAF	Geocoded National Address File
IHF	Interviewer Household Form
SA1	Statistical Area Level 1
SLA	Statistical Local Area
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas

### Census Topics 1911-2011 (Appendix)

#### Census Topics 1911-2011

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TOPICS	1911	1921	1933	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Name	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Age	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(1)*	(1)*
Sex	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Marital status	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Relationship (family structure)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(2)*	(3)*	(4)*	*	*	*	*	*
Duration of existing marriage	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(5)*					
Duration of widowhood								*								
Married more than once											*	*				
Number of children existing marriage	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*							
previous marriage	*	*														
all marriages 'ever had'								*	*		*		*		*	*
Number of dependent children		*	*	*												
Orphanhood		*														
Birthplace	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Birthplace of parents		*						*	*	*	*	*	*	(6)*	*	*
Year of Arrival (period of residence in Australia)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Citizenship	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(7)*	(7)*	(8)*	*	*	*	*	*
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander origin (Race)	*	*	*	*	*	*	(9)*	(10)*	(10)*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ethnic origin											*(11)			*	*	*
Number of usual residents		*														
Usual residence at Census time						(12)*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Internal migration usual residence:																
1 year ago									*	*	*	(13)*	*	*	*	*
5 years ago								*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Number of overseas residents or visitors								*	*							
Blindness, deaf-mutism	*	*	*													
Handicaps									*							
Need for assistance															(14)*	(14)*
Language use		(15)*	(16)*						(17)*	(18)*	(19)*	*	*	*	*	*
Religion	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Personal Computers and Internet															(20)*	
Education highest level attained	(21)*						*	*							*	*
current schooling	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(22)*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
age left school									*	*	*	*	*			

TOPICS	1911	1921	1933	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Educational qualifications							*	(23)*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(24)*	(24)*
Holidays									*							
Child care									*							
Unpaid work															(25)*	(25)*
War service				*												
Income			*						*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Life insurance									*							
Labour force																
(occupational status)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(26)*	*	*	*	*	*	*
unemployment duration	*	*	*	*	*	*										
unemployment cause		*	*	*	*	*										
Occupation	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(27)*	*	*	*	*	*
Industry (28)	(29)*	(29)*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hours worked							*	(30)*	(30)*	(31)*	(31)*	(31)*	(30)*	(30)*	(30)*	(30)*
Journey to work								(32)*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mode of travel to work									*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Motor bike licences									*							
Motor vehicle licences									*							
Type of benefits received									*							
Retirement benefits scheme									*							
Household address on Census Night	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Number of bedrooms	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Number of rooms										*	(33)*					
Tenure (nature of occupancy)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(34)*	(35)*	(35)*	(35)*	(35)*	(34)*	*	*	*
Type of landlord					(36)*	(36)*	(37)*	(38)*	*	*	*	*	(39)*	*	(39)*	(39)*
Rent	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Housing loan repayment									(40)*	(41)*	(42)*	(41)*	(43)*	(43)*	(43)*	(43)*
Number of vehicles							*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(44)*	*	*
Dwelling Internet connection															*	*
Private dwelling classification (Type of dwelling structure)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(45)*	*	*	*	*	*	(46)*	(46)*
Non-private dwelling (classification)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other dwelling (classification)													(47)*	(48)*	(49)*	(49)*
Material of walls	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	(50)*						
Material of roof		*														
Date of building				*	*	*	*	*	*							
Facilities																
gas				*	*	*	*	*	(51)*							
electricity				*	*	*	*	*	(51)*							
water supply				*					*							
toilet				*												
bathroom				*	*	*	*	*								
kitchen					*	*	*	*								
television						*	*	*								
cooking				*												
TOPICS	1911	1921	1933	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Sleeping out			*	*												
Farm dwelling					*	*	*	*	*							
Method of sewerage disposal								*	*							
Number of extra homes owned or being purchased								*								
Reason dwelling unoccupied								(52)*	*	*	*					

(1) Since the 2006 Census, the person is asked for either date of birth or age.

(2) Prior to and including 1976, the term relationship to head was used.

- (3) The term head was considered inappropriate and relationship to Person 1 was asked.
- (4) Since 1986 relationship to Person 1/Person 2 has been asked.
- (5) Year of first marriage was used.
- (6) Since 2001 the country of birth of parents questions were replaced by questions asking whether a person's parents were born in Australia or overseas
- (7) Prior to 1976, nationality rather than citizenship was asked.
- (8) Since 1986 the person has been asked whether or not they were an Australian citizen.
- (9) In all Censuses prior to 1971, respondents were required to state their race and, where race was mixed, to specify the proportion of each.
- (10) In the 1971 and 1976 Censuses, a question with response categories of European, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Other was included.
- (11) A question on each person's ancestry was asked for the first time in 1986.
- (12) The 1961 Census asked for state of usual residence.
- (13) State level only.
- (14) Need for assistance questions will cover the areas of self care, movement and communication. Reason for need for assistance or supervision will also be asked.
- (15) Question asked whether the person could read and write.
- (16) Question asked whether the person could read and write a foreign language if unable to read and write English.
- (17) The 1976 Census asked for all languages regularly used.
- (18) In 1981 ability to speak English was asked.
- (19) Since 1986 two separate questions have been asked - language used and ability to speak English.
- (20) Questions on usage of personal computers and the Internet were asked for the first time in 2001.
- (21) Included a question where respondents reported their highest level of educational achievement.
- (22) Since 1976, a question on attendance at school or other educational institution has been asked.
- (23) Since 1971, people aged 15 or more have been asked whether they had obtained a qualification. If so, information on the name of highest qualification obtained, field of study, the name of institution and the year obtained was collected.
- (24) In 2006, the question asking at which institution was the persons highest qualification obtained was removed, as evaluation of the use of this question during processing found there was little or no benefit in it being asked. In 2006, the response options for the year qualification completed question was altered to a choice of "Yes, before 1998" or "No, 1998 or later", with 1998 being the year the Australian Qualifications Framework was introduced. This has been continued for the 2011 Census.
- (25) In 2006 unpaid work was asked for the first time. These questions include unpaid domestic work, unpaid care due to a disability, long term illness or old age, unpaid child care and voluntary work.
- (26) In the Censuses since 1981, respondents have been required to answer a series of questions from which labour force status was coded.
- (27) An additional question - main tasks or duties performed in the occupation has been asked since 1986.
- (28) Place of work was first collected in 1954.
- (29) Employer's occupation was asked in 1911 and 1921.
- (30) In 1971, 1976 and since 1996 the hours worked question has focused on hours worked in all jobs held in the week prior to the Census.
- (31) The 1981, 1986 and 1991 Censuses asked for hours worked in the main job in the week prior to the Census.
- (32) Journey to work topic has been derived from coding of address of usual residence and address of workplace to obtain origins and destinations of travel to work. The name of this topic will be changed to be "Workplace Address" for the 2006 Census.
- (33) Data was collected but not processed.
- (34) From 1911 to 1971, and since 1996, a direct question on nature of occupancy was asked.
- (35) From 1976 to 1991, nature of occupancy data was derived from mortgage and rent questions.
- (36) If paying rent to a Government Authority in 1954 or a State Housing Authority in 1961, respondents were instructed to write 'Tenant (G)'.
- (37) Tenants in 1966 had the option of marking the relevant State Housing Authority or 'other landlord'.
- (38) In 1971, response categories comprised State Housing Authority, employer or other landlord.
- (39) The number of landlord response categories rose from three (from 1971 until 1991) to seven in 1996 and 2001, and to eight for the 2006 and 2011 Censuses.
- (40) In 1976 the monthly payment made on first and second mortgages was asked.
- (41) Average monthly payment for total mortgages was asked.
- (42) Monthly payment made on the loans for the dwelling was asked.
- (43) Those with mortgage repayments had the option of writing the weekly, fortnightly or monthly amount paid.
- (44) In 2001 this question also asked for the number of motorbikes and motor scooters. Asking for motorbikes and motor scooters was removed in 2006.
- (45) This question has been completed by the Census Collector since 1976.
- (46) This question moved from the back of the Census form to the Collector Record Book in 2006.
- (47) In 1996 a new classification was developed for Other Dwellings. It included caravans in caravan parks, boats in marinas, manufactured home estates and self-care units in accommodation for the retired or aged, all of which were enumerated using household forms. In 1986 and 1991, caravans in caravan parks and boats in marinas were included in the Non-Private Dwelling classification.
- (48) An additional category - apartment complexes (with mixed occupancy) was included in Other Dwellings.
- (49) The name of the topic changed to Private Dwelling Establishments in 2006.
- (50) The question was answered by the Census Collector in 1981.
- (51) In 1976, type of fuel or power used for household purposes was asked.
- (52) Completed by the Census Collector in the Censuses from 1971 to 1986.

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## Supporting Information on Topics (Appendix)

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION ON TOPICS

Topics - Recommended for Retention  
Topics - To Be Reviewed  
Topics - Recommended For Exclusion  
Potential New Topics

This appendix contains further information on the ABS topic proposals. These are the preliminary views of the ABS and are aimed at initiating the public consultation process.

The descriptions below include references to the question number for the 2011 Census Household Form, which may assist some people in understanding the topic. The Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0) is another source of information on Census data and classifications.

## **TOPICS - RECOMMENDED FOR RETENTION**

### **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin**

The Census is the only comprehensive source of small area socio-demographic data on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. The main purpose of this question is to determine the number, distribution and characteristics of people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. It is used in estimation and projections of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Data collected from this question are used by governments and research institutions to quantify and describe the circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and is used in regular reporting to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on the National Indigenous Reform Agreement.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 7

### **Address on Census night**

The collection of information on household address on Census Night is essential for the conduct of an accurate and high quality Census. Household address is the basic unit used to distribute, collect and monitor return of Census forms. It also forms the basis for geographic coding based on place of enumeration. It is used for the estimation of the resident population in each of the states, territories and local areas, which are required by legislation for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds. The population estimates are dependent on the five-yearly Census and are calculated by adjusting the Census count for underenumeration, excluding visitors from overseas and adding Australian residents who are overseas at the time of the Census. For further information see Population Estimates: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2009 (cat. no. 3228.0.55.001).

Address on Census night is only used for specific purposes and has not been retained after Census processing for previous Census cycles.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 1

### **Age**

Age data is essential for the estimation of the resident population in each of the states, territories and local areas, which are required by legislation for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds. The population estimates are dependent on the five-yearly Census and are calculated by adjusting the Census count for underenumeration, excluding visitors from overseas and adding Australian residents who are overseas at the time of the Census. Age is essential for most socio-demographic analysis of Census data and it is also required for national reporting to bodies such as COAG.

There may be some small enhancements made to the age question in the 2016 Census, to reduce respondent confusion and improve data quality. The Census will continue to collect date of birth to enhance the quality of age data.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 4

### **Attendance at an educational institution**

This topic is used for education and labour market planning. It identifies the current study and educational participation of respondents. This topic is considered to be of high priority to educational planners at federal, state and community levels and is used in decisions on the allocation of funds for schools. Significant changes are occurring in education participation and further changes are anticipated. Data from this question, when cross-classified with other Census variables, are very important in monitoring these changes as they occur. This topic is used in annual reporting to COAG on the National Education Agreement.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 24 and 25

### **County of birth**

Data on the country a person was born in are used to produce estimated resident population by country of birth. Data on country of birth are critical in developing and monitoring programs for migrants. There is a high demand for this data from all levels of government, community organisations and service providers and the need cannot be met from sample surveys or from overseas arrivals and departure statistics.

The ABS will make some small changes to the list of response categories for common countries of birth to reflect the most common responses received in the 2011 Census. There is also a write-in box for other countries of birth, which will remain unchanged.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 12

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### **Family relationship/Social marital status**

Family relationship is critical in understanding changes in Australian society as well as trends in family composition. Data gathered from questions on this topic are used to identify different types of households and the structure of family groups within each household. Data about households and families are of considerable value in their own right and also when cross-classified with other variables.

There is currently a review of standards for Family, Household and Income Unit Variables, 2005 (cat. no. 1286.0), which aims to improve the ability for data from this topic to be collected accurately and coded efficiently in household surveys. The review will consider improvements for the Census to better meet the needs of users that cannot currently be adequately met, such as multi-family households, grandparent families and same sex couples. Consequently, the question design and wording might be changed for the 2016 Census. As part of this, the ABS is looking at ways of improving the recording of family relationships, particularly for complex and multi-family households.

The ABS is reviewing whether the output of Registered marital status through family relationship/social marital status is sufficient to meet requirements.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 5, 52 and 53

### **Highest year of schooling**

This topic is an important input into determining level of highest educational attainment. It is also an important indicator of education need and disadvantage, and is used for planning and profiling at the small area level. Data from this topic are used in annual reporting to COAG on the National Education Agreement and the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 27

### **Hours worked**

Information on hours worked is used to derived full-time/part-time status. It is used to study the changes in part-time employment, work patterns and growth in leisure activities as well as to estimate child care needs. Information on hours worked, cross-classified by industry and occupation, is required by labour market economists to analyse changes in the labour force within small geographic regions and for small groups such as Indigenous people, migrants, sole parents and specific age groups.

A question relating to the number of hours worked by employed people in the week prior to the Census (actual hours) has been asked in each Census since 1966. There was some variation in whether only main job or all jobs were included, but this question has referred to all jobs since 1996 to provide greater comparability with data from other sources. From 2001, respondents have been requested to write in the specific number of hours worked (rather than selecting a range of hours), thereby providing more detailed information.

There is some additional demand for information on usual hours worked. Usual hours are not affected by unusual circumstances and can provide information on the person's 'usual' arrangement whereas hours actually worked relates to the specified period and may be affected by unusual circumstances such as overtime, leave or strikes.

The ABS recommends that the Census continues to collect information on hours worked. User feedback is sought on the relative priorities of the existing topic on actual hours (hours worked last week) and the potential

replacement topic of usual hours.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 44

### **Housing costs**

The data collected from housing rental costs and housing loan repayments are important as they are used to assist in benchmarks for the CPI and Australian National Accounts. This data also helps estimate homelessness and housing affordability. Homelessness is an indicator in the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. The Census is the only source of this data for small areas and small population groups.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 56 and 58

### **Income**

Census data on income are used as an indicator of relative advantage and disadvantage and economic wellbeing, especially for small areas and small population groups. Census income data are an input variable into Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) which is used in a range of COAG reports.

Testing of the topic has shown that some people may leave this question unanswered as they think it does not apply to them (e.g. those not in the labour force, pensioners and self-funded retirees).

In previous Census cycles, people were asked to report their usual income by selecting an income range (not in actual dollars). Household and family incomes are not collected in the Census but are derived from personal income data by imputing a specific dollar amount for each personal income range selected by each family or household member. See Income data in the Census for more details.

It is envisaged the income topic will be improved by collecting more precise income data through a write-in question. The ABS will consider the possible increase in respondent burden through this type of question, as well as any subsequent impact on data quality. The introduction of questions on sources of income is also being considered. The ABS will also investigate the feasibility of statistical data integration of other data sources to partially replace or complement the direct collection of income in the 2016 Census.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 33

### **Industry of employment**

Data on the geographic distribution of industry are needed to monitor labour market changes and provide a basis for social and economic policy and planning. The Census is the only source of industry data at the detailed level for most industries and for small areas, and enables cross-classification with other employee characteristics (such as qualifications or occupation).

The ABS will consider whether there is sufficient user demand for the Census to continue coding industry at the most detailed level (four-digit level) of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (cat. no. 1292.0), or whether the unit group (three-digit) is sufficient.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 42 and 43

### **Internal migration**

Information on usual residence one year ago and five years ago is used to determine the patterns of internal migration, which contribute to the calculation of estimated resident population, population projections and regional migration statistics. The population estimates are dependent on the five-yearly Census and are calculated by adjusting the Census count for underenumeration, excluding visitors from overseas and adding Australian residents who are overseas at the time of the Census.

Data collected on internal migration are also used in the production of intercensal and postcensal population estimates, all of which are compiled on the basis of usual residence. Coupled with information from other questions, the Census is the only source to provide information on the characteristics of the migratory population and the non-migratory population for all geographic levels.

The ABS is considering the collection of actual country of residence one year and five years ago in the Census, instead of the current tick-box for 'other country'.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 9 and 10

### **Labour force status**

Information about labour force status is essential for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning

purposes. The Census is the only available source of data on labour force status at the small area level and for small population groups. Data collected are used to determine a person's labour force status, i.e. employed (full-time or part-time), unemployed or not in the labour force. This information is used extensively by national, state and local government stakeholders.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 34, 44, 46 and 47

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### **Landlord type**

This topic defines the landlord type of the dwelling, such as whether it is rented privately via a landlord, a government agency or residential park. Data collected on landlord type is used for planning and policy purposes. The Census is the only source of rental data for small areas and for small groups of the population. Tenure and landlord type are an important part of estimating homelessness, which is an indicator for COAG reporting on the National Affordable Housing Agreement.

Landlord Type standards are being reviewed prior to the 2016 Census.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 57

### **Location of private dwelling**

This topic describes the location of a private dwelling, such as caravans, residential parks, retirement villages and others. It is an important part of estimating homelessness and people who are marginally housed. The majority of private dwellings are recorded as other. This topic is also used to determine the number of retirement villages and home estates, and the characteristics of residents. This information is used to assist in highlighting dwelling trends in the aging population. Census data on location of private dwelling is used to assist in performance measurement indicators in the National Affordable Housing Agreement. See also Structure of Private dwelling, Type of non-private dwelling and Residential status in a non-private dwelling.

2011 Census: Question was answered by Census Field Officers

### **Main language other than English spoken at home**

Data gained from questions on language use are important for a wide range of policies at the national, state, territory and local levels. All levels of government require language use data for small areas and population groups to be available for monitoring and implementing associated programs.

For the 2016 Census, the ABS will make some small changes to the list of response categories for common main languages other than English spoken at home to reflect the most common responses received in the 2011 Census.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 16

### **Mode of travel to work**

The data collected from this topic are widely used at the small area level for transport planning. It complements the data collected from the Workplace address/Journey to Work topic. They identify how people travelled to work on Census day (e.g. train, bus, car driver, car passenger and bicycle).

2011 Census Household Form Question: 45

### **Name**

The collection of information regarding name is considered essential for the conduct of an accurate and high quality Census. It is used for form management procedures and coding of household composition. Name is essential for the conduct of a high quality Post Enumeration Survey, which is used to measure the level of underenumeration in the Census. The population estimates are dependent on the five-yearly Census and are calculated by adjusting the Census count for underenumeration excluding visitors from overseas and adding Australian residents who are overseas at the time of the Census. For further information see Population Estimates: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2009 (cat. no. 3228.0.55.001).

The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, the *Federal Financial Relations Act 2009* and the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* require the Statistician to provide estimates as well as determine the population of each state and territory each year. This information is used to determine the distribution of goods and services tax revenue and the number of seats in Parliament.

Name is not available as an output item. Prior to the 2001 Census, names were not retained after processing of the data was completed. For the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Censuses, name-identified Census information was



provided to the National Archives of Australia to be released for future genealogical and other research after a closed period of 99 years. This has only occurred when a person has explicitly consented to their data being retained for this purpose.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 2

### **Non-school qualifications**

This topic is an important input into determining the level of highest educational attainment. Data gathered during the Census about non-school qualifications are used to support planning and policy development in the areas of education, training and employment. This topic is used in annual reporting to COAG on the National Education Agreement and the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 28, 29, 30 and 31

### **Number of bedrooms**

Housing authorities and other users require data on the number of bedrooms in a property to provide an indication of dwelling size, dwelling utilisation or under-utilisation, and potential overcrowding by the calculation of occupancy ratios (i.e. the number of people per room/bedroom). This topic is an important part of estimating homelessness and for investigating people who are marginally housed.

The Census is the only comprehensive source of data on number of bedrooms at the small area level and for small population groups. This topic is used for calculating homelessness and homelessness indicators which are included in COAG reporting for the National Affordable Housing Agreement as well as the National Partnership on Homelessness.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 55.

### **Occupation**

Data about occupation are required for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes. Information is required for small geographic areas and for some finely classified occupations. Detailed occupation data are needed to analyse current and potential imbalances in the supply and demand for labour with varying skills at the national, regional and local area levels. The data on occupation is enhanced when it is combined with data on industry of employment and qualifications.

The ABS will consider whether there is sufficient user demand for the Census to continue coding occupation at the most detailed level (six-digit level) of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (cat. no. 1220.0), or whether the unit group (four-digit) is sufficient.

The ABS and Statistics New Zealand are undertaking a minor review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations .

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 38 and 39

### **Proficiency in spoken English**

Questions on language use are important for a wide variety of policies at a range of geographic levels. This topic is used in conjunction with Main language other than English spoken at home, to assist in planning English language services at the local level.

This topic requires people who speak a language other than English at home to report whether they speak English very well, well, not well or not at all. This question is very subjective, which may cause data quality issues.

2011 Census Household Form Question:17

### **Registered marital status**

Registered marital status provides an insight into family structure and stability, and serves as an explanatory variable for social analysis. It identifies whether people are presently never married, widowed, divorced, separated or in a registered marriage.

Data about registered marital status are also available through the family relationship/social marital status topic, which is included in every Census and outputs a person's relationship status based on their current living arrangements, including registered marriage and de facto relationships. It is acknowledged that this will not meet the demand for data on the registered marital status of individuals who are not cohabiting with a partner, such as widows.

The ABS recommends that Registered marital status be considered in conjunction with the output available from family relationship/social marital status. Users should consider the ongoing need for information from the Registered marital status topic not based on current living arrangements (e.g. never married, separated, divorced and widowed) and whether the information available from social marital status topic will meet requirements.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 6

### **Religious affiliation**

The Census is the only source of detailed, small area religious affiliation data. Information on religious affiliation is widely used in the religious community, and by government agencies which provide services complementary to those provided by religious organisations.

The ABS will make some small changes to the list of response categories for common religious groups to reflect the most common responses received in the 2011 Census.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 19

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### **Residential status in a non-private dwelling**

This topic differentiates people staying in non-private dwellings, either on a short-term basis or as a resident, from live-in staff and their families. This topic is important for planning and delivery of services and it is used to inform understanding of dwelling stock supply and demand trends. It is used to estimate homelessness and investigate people who are marginally housed. Homelessness is a key indicator for COAG reporting. It is also required to get a total estimate of the Australian population. Over 800,000 people were enumerated in non-private dwellings in the 2011 Census. See also Structure of a private dwelling, Type of Non-private dwelling and Location of Private dwelling.

This topic will be tested to assess the impact of the proposed change in procedures for the 2016 Census.

2011 Personal Census Form Question: 6

### **Sex**

Information gained from questions on sex is essential for the estimation of the resident population in each of the states, territories and local areas, which are required by legislation for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds. The population estimates are dependent on the five-yearly Census and are calculated by adjusting the Census count for under-enumeration, excluding visitors from overseas and adding Australian residents who are overseas at the time of the Census. Information on sex is essential for most socio-demographic analysis of Census data and it is also required for national reporting to bodies such as COAG.

The ABS is currently reviewing the Sex Standard which may impact on the collection of sex and gender in ABS household collections including the Census. Consistency between the ABS and government standards on sex and gender will be taken into consideration.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 3

### **Structure of private dwelling**

This topic defines the type of dwelling in any particular location (e.g. separate house, row or terrace, townhouse, flat, unit or apartment). It is used to determine changes in housing patterns and stock, land use forecasting, transport planning and the compilation of homelessness estimates.

Initiatives in housing policy have strengthened the need for detailed information about Australia's housing stock. Information on the structure of a private dwelling is an important component of this detailed information. This topic is used to assist in performance measurement against indicators in the National Affordable Housing Agreement.

This question was previously answered by Census field officers as a part of the collection process. However, this will not be possible for the majority of dwellings enumerated in 2016 as it is proposed that the majority of households will complete the Census online and will not be visited by Census Field Officers. A new collection method will be tested for the 2016 Census. See also Type of Non-private dwelling, location of Private dwelling and Residential status in a non-private dwelling.

2011 Census: Question was answered by Census Field Officers

### **Tenure type**

Data on Tenure type (whether a dwelling is rented, owned with a mortgage or owned without a mortgage) are used for planning, analysis and policy purposes for small area and population groups. When cross-classified with other characteristics of households, they are used for housing and social welfare policy and planning by the government and other providers. Tenure and landlord type are an important part of estimating homelessness, which is an indicator for COAG reporting, including the National Affordable Housing Agreement.

Tenure Type standards are being reviewed prior to the 2016 Census.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 56

### **Type of non-private dwelling**

This topic describes the type of non-private dwelling in which persons were counted on Census night, (e.g. hotels, nursing homes, corrective institutions and hospitals). Census data about people residing in non-private dwellings and the type of non-private dwelling are important for planning and delivery of services. It is used to inform understanding of dwelling stock supply and demand trends. It is used to estimate homelessness and investigate people who are marginally housed. Homelessness is a key indicator for COAG reporting.

This topic will be tested to assess the impact of the proposed change in procedures for the 2016 Census.

2011 Census: Question was answered by Census Field Officers

### **Usual residence at Census time**

Information on usual residence at Census time is essential for the production of accurate state, territory and local government resident population estimates, a primary objective of the Census. The population estimates are dependent on the five-yearly Census and are calculated by adjusting the Census count for underenumeration, excluding visitors from overseas and adding Australian residents who are overseas at the time of the Census. Usual residence forms the basis for geographic coding based on place of enumeration, and is widely used for a range of planning, policy and research purposes.

Place of usual residence is the primary geographical basis for the release of most Census statistics, enabling the disaggregation of cross tabulations into various geographic levels (e.g. state/territory, regional areas and local government areas) and is used in conjunction with other questions to compile internal migration statistics.

Address of usual residence has not been retained after Census processing for previous Census cycles.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 8

### **Workplace address/Journey to work**

The data collected from this topic on address of place of work is coded to destination zones, creating valuable information on journey to work patterns and on daytime populations of specified areas. This topic is widely used at the small area level and complements the topic on Mode of travel to work.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 8 and 41

### **Year of arrival in Australia**

Year of arrival data are necessary to analyse changes in the characteristics of migrants over time, particularly in distinguishing between recent and 'older' migrants. They are cross-classified with other Census questions to produce data on the characteristics of migrants.

Although there is a significant need for this data for small areas and small population groups, it might not need to be directly collected in the Census. The ABS will also investigate the suitability of other data sources.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 13

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## **TOPICS - TO BE REVIEWED**

### **Ancestry**

A person's ancestry, in conjunction with their country of birth and information on whether their parents were born in Australia or overseas, assists in indicating the ethnic background of first and second generation Australians. These data are used to determine a measure for the ethnic composition of the population and to inform delivery of services to particular ethnic communities.

This question has been reviewed several times since its introduction in 1986 and re-introduction in 2001, with a focus on subjectivity and respondent confusion about what the question meant, particularly for families who had been in Australia for many generations. The later reviews agreed that Ancestry, in combination with a question on whether parents were born in Australia or overseas, would provide data of acceptable quality. This will now be reconsidered, particularly in the context of demand for more detailed information on country of birth of parents. The topic could possibly be considered for inclusion on a 10-yearly cycle of collection.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 18

### **Australian citizenship**

Information about Australian citizenship is used to monitor the take-up of Australian citizenship by the overseas population.

Although there is a significant need for this data for small areas and small population groups, it might not need to be directly collected in the Census. The ABS will also investigate the suitability of other data sources.

If information on Australian Citizenship continues to be collected in the Census, there will be consideration of expanding the question to enable respondents to record the actual country of citizenship, if not Australian.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 11

### **Country of birth of parents**

Data on a person's ethnic or cultural origin are in high demand. This topic, when combined with Ancestry, provides a measure of ethnic composition of the population.

The version of this question that appeared on the 2011 Census form asked whether the person's parents were born in Australia or overseas. This version dates from 2001 when the topic of Ancestry was reinstated on the form (prior to this date detailed information on country of birth was collected). However, there is ongoing demand for more detailed data on specific country of birth of parents. While the current question identifies the second generation, it does not assist in assessing the size of groups based on specific country or countries or origin. There may be consideration of expanding this topic to enable respondents to record their actual country of birth of parents rather than 'overseas'.

The ABS is currently reviewing this question in conjunction with the Ancestry topic to determine priority, relevance and suitability. The ABS is seeking user input on priority and relevance.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 14 and 15

### **Government/Non-Government employer**

Information on government/non-government employer, classified by industry and occupation, is required by labour market economists to analyse changes in the labour force within small geographic regions and for small groups such as Indigenous people, migrants, sole parents and specific age groups. This topic is also used by local governments and jurisdictions to provide information on levels and distribution of government employment in regions and municipalities. The ABS considers that this topic rates less highly on the assessment criteria than other topics, and it will review its relevance for inclusion in the 2016 Census. The ABS is seeking further justification for the continued collection of data on this topic.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 40

### **Internet access**

This topic has been included on the Census form since 2001 and is important for government policy and planning decisions, especially around access to the internet and the anticipated take-up of high speed broadband. There are a number of equity issues associated with access to the internet. This question is used to target and monitor government programs.

There have been a number of changes to this topic since it was first included, to reflect the rapidly changing nature of this field. The 2001 Census collected data on internet and computer use by individuals. The 2006 and 2011 Censuses collected information on whether the internet could be accessed at the dwelling and the type of connection in the dwelling (broadband, dial-up and other).

The internet and computer technology field is very dynamic and it is difficult to anticipate future key issues. Most Australians now have access to computers and the internet. The complexity of the field also restricts the type of data which can be collected through the Census. In the past, the key statistical requirement has been the type of connection to the internet but for the 2016 Census the main priority appears to be personal use of

the internet (e.g. voice over internet and teleconferencing, e-Health services, home-based work, accessing government services, buying or selling goods and services, entertainment, study-related activities, social networking and general browsing).

The ABS is seeking justification for the ongoing collection of information about internet access and the relative priorities of the potential components of this topic (type of dwelling internet connection, personal access to the internet or personal use of the internet).

2011 Census Household Form Question: 59

### **Need for assistance**

Data on people who need assistance due to a severe or profound disability are required for developing federal and state government policies and community based programs, and for program and service delivery funding allocation. Detailed data at the small area level and for small population groups are particularly useful for this topic. Census data on this topic are used in the calculation of performance indicators for COAG reporting on the National Disability Agreement.

This topic identifies people who report a need for assistance due to a 'profound or severe core activity limitation'. However, due to the collection methodology and question format, the data should be taken as an indication of the characteristics of people who report a need for assistance rather than as the total population prevalence of people with a 'profound or severe core activity limitation'. The quality of the 2006 and 2011 Census data will be considered in making a decision on whether this topic should be included in the 2016 Census.

The ABS notes recent international recommendations on disability questions suitable for Censuses, which would require the addition to and testing of several questions for the 2016 Census. These will be considered if the topic is included in the 2016 Census.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 20, 21, 22 and 23

### **Status in employment**

Information about status in employment is essential for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes. The Census is the only source of data on status in employment (employee, employer, own account worker and contributing family worker) at the small area level and for small population groups. The information is particularly important for distinguishing between employees and self-employed people. The output classification for this topic will now incorporate information on employment type.

The ABS considers that this topic rates less highly against the assessment criteria than other topics and it will review its relevance for inclusion in the 2016 Census. The ABS is seeking further justification for the continued inclusion of this topic.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 34, 35, 36 and 37

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### **Unpaid work**

This topic was introduced in the 2006 Census following strong interest in monitoring the value, composition and growth of unpaid work. Information on unpaid activities is important in identifying the characteristics of carers of people with special needs (such as the elderly, children and people with disabilities), and assisting with planning for both work and non-work environments.

The 2006 and 2011 Censuses collected information on four components of unpaid work:

- unpaid domestic work
- unpaid care of others due to disability, illness or old age
- unpaid care of children
- voluntary work.

The ABS plans to review outcomes from the 2011 Census in terms of data quality, the usefulness of the information obtained through the questions and the appropriateness of the 2016 Census as a vehicle for the collection of data related to unpaid work.

There is also demand from Government and other organisations for data on people's activities while not in the labour force, particularly in relation to voluntary work and caring responsibilities. Main activity of people not in the labour force could potentially be a component of the unpaid work topic to replace or complement the

existing components. This component could identify activities such as being retired, caring for children, attending an education institution, looking after ill or disabled person or working in unpaid voluntary job.

Unless the ABS can be convinced that there is sufficient justification that the Census is the most appropriate vehicle for the collection of this information, and it is shown that high quality data can be obtained, some components of this topic of unpaid work may be excluded from the 2016 Census. Information is also sought on whether any components of this topic have higher priority than other components and the relative priority of a potential new component on main activity of people not in the labour force.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 48, 49, 50 and 51

## **TOPICS - RECOMMENDED FOR EXCLUSION**

### **Community Development Employment program (CDEP)**

This topic collects information about participation in the CDEP. It is asked on the interviewer household form (IHF), which is used in nominated discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where use of the standard census form is impractical. Consequently, it does not provide a national measure of participation in the program.

There have been a number of reforms to the CDEP program since 2009, which affect the comparability of the Census time series on this topic and the utility of the data collected. Detailed information about CDEP is available from the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

### **Employment type**

Information about employment type is important for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes. It is needed to understand the characteristics of the workforce and the extent of self-employment. The Census is the only source of data on type of employment at the small area level and for small population groups.

Following a review of labour statistics standards, the employment type and status in employment classifications are being combined into one output classification: status in employment. This means that employment type is no longer separately required in the Census, as the information previously collected for this topic will now be available from the status of employment topic.

There will be no changes required to Census questions.

2011 Census Household Form Questions: 34, 35, 36 and 37

### **Number of children ever born**

This topic is used for population projections and the assessment of changes in Australian fertility patterns. In 2011, this topic was initially considered for exclusion as it is a topic that is usually included in the Census every 10 years (1986, 1996 and 2006). However, a decision was subsequently made to conduct the 2011 Census on a basis comparable to the 2011 Census, so the question was not removed and was asked in two consecutive censuses.

Some interest has been shown in the inclusion of this topic in each Census, rather than every 10 years. Refinement of the question over time and increased awareness of the purpose and use of this data have diminished some of the factors which led to the cyclic nature of the question. However, inclusion of this topic in the 2016 Census needs to be considered in terms of its priority in relation to other topics.

Unless the ABS can be convinced that there is sufficient justification for a review of the 10-yearly cycle for this topic, it is the ABS view that a question on the number of children ever born be excluded from the 2016 Census with the expectation that it be included in the 2021 Census.

2011 Census Household Form Question: 32

### **Number of motor vehicles garaged**

Data on the number and distribution of vehicles have been used to assess parking and public transport requirements. However, the ABS understands that this topic has limited current use as a transport indicator and the Motor Vehicle Census may meet user requirements.

Consequently, the ABS recommended that this topic be considered for removal from the 2016 Census unless strong user justification is provided.

## POTENTIAL NEW TOPICS

### **Educational institution address/Journey to education**

This proposed new topic would involve collecting address of educational institution and coding it to destination zones to create information on journey to education patterns and on daytime populations of specified areas. The ABS recognises that information about journey to educational institution, in conjunction with data on journey to work, has been identified as a critical need for transport planning and local infrastructure investment purposes. Journey to education institution would also be useful for the purposes of education planning. Educational institution address would also be useful in understanding the socioeconomic characteristics of families with children at particular schools and could be used for education policy development.

The journey to work questions are only answered by people aged 15 years of age or over who are in the labour force. However, the journey to educational institution questions would need to be answered by all students at educational institutions, regardless of age. Consequently, the practicality of collecting this information will need to be carefully considered by the ABS, as will any testing outcomes.

Provided the ABS can be convinced there is sufficient justification and it is shown that high quality data can be collected, questions on the journey to educational institution could be included in the 2016 Census.

### **Long-term health conditions**

There is strong demand for detailed knowledge of the location of people with certain long-term health conditions, particularly at the small area level. This will enable targeting of programs and resources to assist in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease. Information about health conditions is key to a number of national and international reporting requirements and is regarded as a measure of progress.

The proposed topic would collect information on a small number of health conditions, based on the national health priority areas. The health conditions could include arthritis, osteoporosis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart and circulatory conditions, kidney disease and mental health conditions.

The ABS is seeking justification for the inclusion of this topic in the 2016 Census.

### **Mode of travel to educational institution**

The ABS recognises that information about mode of travel to educational institution, in conjunction with data on journey and mode of travel to work, has been identified as a critical need for transport planning and local infrastructure investment purposes. Journey to education institution would also be useful for purposes of education planning.

However, unlike the mode of travel to work questions, which are answered only by people aged 15 years of age or over who are in the labour force, the mode of travel to educational institution questions would need to be answered by all students at educational institutions, regardless of age. Consequently, the practicality of collecting this information will need to be carefully considered by the ABS, as will any testing outcomes.

Provided the ABS can be convinced there is sufficient justification and it is shown that high quality data can be collected, questions on the journey to educational institution could be included in the 2016 Census.

### **Second residence/Ownership of other dwelling**

There is growing user interest in data about second residence, particularly in relation to: people who regularly stay in a second residence due to work commitments; children in shared custody arrangements who have an alternate usual residence from the one they stayed in on Census night; and students who regularly stay in a second residence due to educational requirements.

Collection of information on second residence would enable improved assessment of the numbers of temporary residents located in communities and would be used for the compilation of service populations. This, in turn, would facilitate more accurate planning for services in these locations.

This topic may also incorporate second residence ownership, which would enhance statistics on wealth and home ownership, and potentially be used to improve measures of socioeconomic status.

This topic will be considered for suitability, relevance and priority to determine whether it is included in the 2016 Census.

### Sources of income

This topic would identify all sources of income that people receive, such as government pensions and allowances, investment income and wages. This new topic would enhance the range of income data collected by the Census and extend the social analysis that can be undertaken. There is strong demand for this data for small area and small population groups, The ABS is also considering improving the quality of income data by adding a write-in box to the current Income question. This topic also serves as an explanatory variable for social analysis.

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## Questions Included in the Submission Form (Appendix)

### SUBMISSION FORM

Listed below are the questions to be addressed in the 2016 Census Submission Form.

This Submission Form is available at [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).

#### QUESTION 1

Please complete details of the person to contact regarding this submission.

*Note:* These details must be completed as anonymous submissions will not be considered. \*Denotes mandatory fields.

#### QUESTION 2

Do you agree to allow the ABS to publicly refer to the information provided in this submission as a statement of your, or your organisation's, views on the relevant topics or procedures?

*Note:* The ABS may make public the views put forward in this submission. However, the ABS will not publish the names of persons or organisations making submissions unless you have given permission to do so.

Yes, I agree

No, I do not agree

#### QUESTION 3

Are you completing this submission as a:

Private individual?

Representative of an organisation or government department?

#### QUESTION 4

What is the name and address of your organisation?

*Note:* For organisations with offices at more than one location please tick the state or territory where your head office is located.

#### QUESTION 5

What is your position in the organisation?

Position Title

Designation/Level/Role

#### QUESTION 6

Which sector best describes your organisation?

Government Sector / Australian Government



Government Sector / State / Territory  
Government Sector / Local  
Private sector (fewer than 20 employees)  
Private sector (20 or more employees)  
Other (please specify)

#### **QUESTION 7**

Does this submission relate to:

A new topic?  
Change to an existing topic?  
The exclusion of a topic?  
Some other aspect of the Census?

#### **QUESTION 8**

What is the name of the topic?

#### **QUESTION 9**

Please define the topic and/or describe modifications you are proposing for the 2016 Census.

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#### **QUESTION 10**

Criteria 1: The topic is of current national importance.

*Note:* What specific purposes will the data be used for? Please consider the following when addressing this criteria:

Please provide details of:

- Uses in policy-making, long-term planning, social and economic applications.
- What benefits will flow from this data.
- The consequences if this topic was not included in the 2016 Census.
- In particular, please consider what activities could not take place or would be significantly reduced or degraded in quality.

#### **QUESTION 11**

Criteria 2: There is a current need for data on the topic for small population groups and/or at the small area level.

*Note:* Please consider when addressing this criteria:

- At what geographic level will data from the topic be required?
- For which population groups will the data from the topic be required?

Please specify why the data would be useful at this level.

#### **QUESTION 12**

Criteria 3: There are no suitable alternative data sources available for the topic.

Are there any alternative data sources available for the topic? If yes, please specify and consider the following in relation to these data sources when addressing this criteria.

- Why are these data sources not appropriate for the purposes indicated in the first criteria?
- Will these data sources provide high quality data for the entire population?
- Name of alternative data source and organisation responsible if known.

### QUESTION 13

Criteria 4: Is the topic suitable for inclusion in the Census?

*Note:* Please consider when addressing this criteria that Census topics should not:

- Upset people by invading their privacy to an unacceptable degree. The information you will get from such a topic would be subject to bias and will affect other data used and collected in conjunction with it.
- Be subjective (i.e. likely to have varying interpretations for individuals, such as "How would you rate your overall health status").
- Seek information which may not be generally known such as "where was your maternal grandmother born".
- Be complex to code or difficult to process. You should consider the way answers would need to be classified.
- Require people to remember things they are unlikely to be able to, for example "What was your income five years ago".
- Seek opinions or attitudes.
- Require more than one or two questions to obtain the required information.
- Require an overlong explanation or instructions to ensure an accurate answer. If the type of question needed cannot be understood with minimum of explanation, it is not suitable or appropriate for inclusion in the Census.

Please comment on the appropriateness of the topic against each of the above points, and include any other relevant issues which may impact on the suitability of the topic for inclusion in the Census.

### QUESTION 14

Criteria 5: Is there likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic in the following Census?

*Note:* Please consider the following when addressing this criteria:

- There is likely to be a continuing need for the data on the topic in the following Census.
- Will there still be a need for data on this topic at the time of next Census in 2021, and into the future?

### QUESTION 15

Please also consider the following points in relation to the topic and include in your submission:

- What data output items will be required for the topic?
- Please provide details of the output categories required and, if appropriate, ranges/descriptions for each category?
- What cross-classifications will be needed with other Census topics?
- Could this topic be included on a 10-yearly cycle rather than a 5-yearly cycle?

### QUESTION 16

Is there any topic which you consider should be excluded from the 2016 Census?

No  
Yes

### QUESTION 17

What is the name of the topic which you consider should be excluded from the 2016 Census?

### QUESTION 18

Why should this topic be excluded from the 2016 Census?

### QUESTION 19

Would you like to provide any further comments on the proposals for the 2016 Census?

## QUESTION 20

Would you like to attach a file to support your submission?

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